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[Lincoln Development Authority hears results of Georgia Southern retail analysis](#)

March 30, 2015

This article originally appeared in the Lincoln Journal on January 29, 2015.



The “Lincoln County Retail Gap Analysis” was presented to the Lincoln County Development Authority at the group’s regular meeting held Tuesday, January 20.

The study was conducted by the Georgia Southern University College of Business Administration’s Bureau of Business Research and Economic Development (BBRED).

Funding for the project was provided by the United States Community Adjustment and Investment Program.

The goal of the initiative was to pinpoint those sectors of the business community that are ready for expansion. The study identified “gaps,” where the county and the City of Lincolnton are experiencing a need for growth, and “surpluses,” which delineate areas where the community is exceeding in fulfilling demands.

In addition to the city and county, the researchers also looked at a 20-minute drive-time radius and a 30-mile radius from the center of the city to represent the distance that the core market could use to attract customers to patronize local businesses. The radius distance has a total population of 214,283.

Other factors included demographics, economic market/conditions, consumer spending, and psychographic data, which is used to build a profile of the interests, attitudes, and values present in a target region.

Representing Georgia Southern at the meeting was research specialist Ben McKay.

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Georgia Southern PR Class Visits Jeff Davis County with GENIE

March 30, 2015



Mrs. Lori Mallard's PR Campaigns class visits Jeff Davis industrial sites

Tasked with creating an online presence for the Joint Development Authority of Jeff Davis County (JDAJDC), GENIE partnered with Mrs. Lori Mallard's Public Relation Campaigns class and visited the rural south central community. Mr. Illya Copeland, Executive Director of the JDAJDC, hosted the class and took students on a tour of working industrial sites in Hazlehurst, Georgia. Students were able to gain a better understanding of the community's economic development strengths and struggles.

Many students found that Jeff Davis' existing industry is thriving but still has room for growth. Hazlehurst is already home to the largest hardwood sawmill in the United States, Beasley Forest Products. The PR Campaigns class stopped by to see where the massive fire took place last year and learned how Beasley was able to take a disaster and turn it around into a PR miracle. Although the disaster claimed a warehouse, office and plethora of product, no one was injured and Beasley did not lose any production hours. The students also stopped by to see the new production facility Beasley is almost finished constructing.

Students compiled their findings from the visit and summarized them in letters to Mr. Copeland.

"Our hands-on research that was obtained during this visit is essential to our understanding and commitment with this campaign project to give Jeff Davis County an online presence," wrote Kaylee Joslin.

A few challenges presented themselves to the students during their research, such as the high unemployment rate. Students learned that potential employees lack certain soft skills that employers find desirable. "...because there is a high unemployment rate in Jeff Davis County, there is an available work force. However, we need to make sure that this work force gets the proper education and training, such as cross training on working in many different areas, setting up informational sessions of how to create a resume, how to dress for an interview, how to prepare for an interview, and information on how to stay away from drugs in order to not lose a potential job due to drug testing, etc," said Mary Hill Amason.

Creating an online presence for Jeff Davis County will be beneficial to industry by spreading statewide awareness. The students continue to work in the classroom with Professor Mallard to develop campaigns and strategies for implementing a new website. A final presentation date has been set. The GENIE team and JDAJDC are excited to be working together with students to further their education and bring new opportunities to Jeff Davis.

Georgia's Enterprise Network for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (GENIE) is a web-based virtual business incubator focused on assisting entrepreneurs and small business owners in economically challenged counties in Georgia. GENIE's goal is to help create and retain jobs in Georgia by harnessing the power of entrepreneurship. GENIE is a grant secured through the Community Adjustment and Investment Program (CAIP) which helps the private sector to create new jobs

and preserve existing jobs that are at risk of being lost in communities that suffered job losses directly or indirectly attributed to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). GENIE participation is open to any interested parties in Georgia with efforts focused in Jeff Davis, Jefferson, Lincoln, Telfair, and Wilkes counties.

Entrepreneur Lecture Series to Feature Digital Cobbler, Lucy Beard

March 30, 2015



On Tuesday, April 28, at 5:30 p.m., in the College of Engineering and Information Technology, Room 1004, the Georgia Southern College of Business Administration Business Innovation Group (BIG) will host the Entrepreneur Lecture Series with speaker, Lucy Beard, as she discusses her adventures in starting Feetz, the digital cobbler for the new era.

After becoming frustrated trying on several pairs of ill-fitting shoes, Beard pondered the idea of custom-fit shoes using 3D printer technology. She and her team spent a year developing the unique SizeMe™ technology with guidance from experts in footwear and 3D printing.

Customers use the Feetz mobile app to take three pictures of each of their feet. Then, the customer designs and personalizes their Feetz shoes to fit his/her own personal style. The shoes are then 3D printed and shipped to the



customer.

Feetz relocated from San Diego into The TENN Master Accelerator Program at Launch Tennessee in Chattanooga. The company has since developed patent-protected algorithms and customized software that create the 3D printable shoes from models of customers' feet. The company has also been working on novel material compositions and material designs to extend the durability and flexibility of the 3D printable materials available. Beard has also raised \$1.3 million in seed funding from Khosla Ventures and The JumpFund.

BIG is excited to have Lucy Beard share her story and amazing technology with the Georgia Southern community as it awaits the much anticipated construction of the digital fabrication laboratory (FabLab) slated to open at City Campus.

Growth of the City Campus with the FabLab and Innovation Incubator will bring similar opportunities to entrepreneurs and innovators in the region.

The Entrepreneur Lecture series was developed by the Center for Entrepreneurial Learning and Leadership as a way to showcase the entrepreneurial spirit. This lecture series plays a great role in helping to harness and grow an innovative culture in the region. For more information or further inquiries, please email Suzanne Hallman, BIG business advisor, at shallman@georgiasouthern.edu.